

DPW UPDATE

December 2002

Helping the Hungry, Homeless on Holidays

by Jessica Eslinger

Imagine carving 90 turkeys, preparing 100 gallons of potatoes, cooking 280 quarts of corn and slicing 200 pies. Sounds like a huge and tiresome task, doesn't it?

But not for Bob Christopher, a program manager for land development. Working with some 60 volunteers he and his wife help to feed between 600 and 800 people every Thanksgiving, something they've been doing for the past 12 years.

Initiated by members of Foothills Christian Fellowship of El Cajon, the Thanksgiving dinner is free and open to the homeless, elderly and hungry.

Turkeys are cooked and delivered by individual families. According to Christopher they have a limited amount of time to get the turkeys ready for serving. So, rather than using knives, designated carvers like himself put on large gloves and tear it apart. He said despite the mess in the kitchen, some people claim it's the best turkey they've ever had. Side dishes and desserts are bought at reduced rates from local wholesalers.

Rather than cafeteria-style service, customers are seated and served by volunteer waiters and waitresses.

This is because, as Christopher says, "We try to show them they're appreciated, even if they don't have family here and even if they're not part of the upper class of society."

Thanksgiving dinner isn't all that's available to people who stop by the El Cajon Community Center on this holiday. El Cajon Mayor Mark Lewis, a big supporter of the event, stops by every year to shake hands with his constituents and to answer any questions. After dinner, customers can take donated blankets, toys, clothing and canned goods with them.

The event grows every year and they more than enough donations and volunteers. They've even had to turn away volunteers due to lack of space in the kitchen and dining areas, but it looks like they might get put to work in the future. The event has been such a success that plans to serve early Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners are in the works.

Christopher, having been with the program since the get-go, eagerly awaits the extra meals and is proud to spend holidays serving his community.

"This is my way of saying 'Thanks' on Thanksgiving," he said.

"At the end of the day, I feel really tired but really good," said Christopher. But, after serving all those turkey feasts, Christopher wants nothing more than a simple hamburger for *his* Thanksgiving dinner.



Christopher takes a moment to share some Thanksgiving dinner experiences.

TRASH DISPOSAL – It's Still Our Business

by Tom Davis, Field Engineering

Most DPW employees would probably think that since we divested our Solid Waste Division, we are no longer in the trash business. Trash is still our business.

Our road station staff still collects trash and debris illegally dumped along our rights-of-way. Since January 1, it has cost \$338,181 to remove 1,096 tons of trash and debris from our maintained roadways. Since January 1, field crews have spent 4,263 hours on this activity alone, more than two full staff years. More than 27% of the service requests we received so far this calendar year have been for trash removal.

Field staff also report an increase in the illegal disposal of big-ticket items like appliances, tires and batteries. Our customers are reporting more and more frequent dumping of refrigerators, sofas, washers and dryers, propane bottles, barbecues, and other large items.

Avoiding Holiday Hazards

by Jack E. Thompson, Safety Officer

You're heading home on a Friday night. It's mid December, so it's already dark, and a light rain is coating your windshield. As you drive along the freeway, a sudden lurch tells you something's wrong.

Minutes later, you're looking at a flat tire. You're on a rough surface. You can't see the ground very well, headlights are zooming past, and you consider whether to dig out tire changing equipment. What shoes are you wearing? Are they appropriate for the conditions?

Here are a few things you might want to consider:

Wear the best non-skid shoe possible, especially during bad weather. Shoes with slick soles should be avoided. Select something that has a large surface area with good traction. High heels don't work well in bad weather.

Slips, trips, & falls lumped together represent the most common cause of injuries both at work and at home. Be aware of objects and conditions that cause falls. Wet stairways can also be a serious hazard. Always be sure to use handrails. Stairwells need to be kept uncluttered, with some sort of non-slip coating applied to the steps.

Inform your supervisor if you notice a step or sidewalk that is worn or slick. Maybe it needs a new coating of non-skid paint and you could be preventing one of your co-workers from being injured. Walk where you are supposed to walk, don't take shortcuts; especially shortcuts through obvious areas where pedestrian traffic is not intended.

Being alert is one of the surest ways to reduce injuries caused by slips, trips, and falls. This includes being aware of your environment. Please bear in mind that your health is the most important possession you have, once lost, it's impossible to replace.

Training

FACING THE JOB INTERVIEW

by Karen Jacobs, Training

Scheduled for a County job interview? Knowing what to expect will help ease those jitters:

- ❖ Expect the interview to be done by a panel. Usually the interview consists of 3-4 people.
- ❖ Be prepared to shake hands. Practice if you need to. Do not carry anything in your right hand. Fumbling with a note taking pad or your hat or purse might be awkward.
- ❖ It will begin with the supervisor explaining ground rules. The panel wants you to be at your best. Remember to smile; the act of smiling will help you relax.
- ❖ Learn everyone's name and use it. A good way to remember it is to say it back to the person during introductions. Say, "Nice to meet you, George." If you mispronounce the name apologize and be glad you caught it early. Using the wrong name or pronunciation during the interview could be very distracting.
- ❖ Ask questions about the job as you proceed. This meeting is where you find out if you want the job or not.
- ❖ Be prepared to share information on your experiences, achievements, and education related to the job.

You may also be asked to explain your overall qualifications for the job. Sell yourself!

Going through a job interview can be nerve racking. Being prepared can help you to relax. Practice with a friend, role-play and call ahead if you have questions about the interview. Finally, remember that being a little nervous *can* work to your advantage. It helps you to be excited and creates enthusiasm in your voice. Good luck!

DIVISION NEWS:

Transportation Services

Nancarrow Does Stormwater



Channel 10 Weatherman Loren Nancarrow wanted to tell his viewers about stormwater runoff prevention, so he turned to DPW.

Mark Lumpkins and the Division I Stormwater Strike Team, and Jim Torres's Flood Control crew joined Environmental Health staff for a demonstration. Producer Revelle Anderson and photojournalist Karen Kelly spent more than an hour videotaping vacor truck operation, channel and culvert cleaning and water sampling. Cid Tesoro, DPW's stormwater program manager, was DPW's spokesman.

Engineering Services

DPW Team Helps Fire Victims

As the first big rainfall in months hammered San Diego County on Veterans Day weekend, Deputy Director Doug Isbell led a team into the backcountry. Their mission was to help residents in the Pines Fire burn area protect their homes and property from stormwater runoff.

Isbell, who also serves as County Engineer and Flood Control Commissioner, spent the weekend with Allen Holmquist, Mike Pinnick, Don Holtz.

Most vegetation that holds soil in place during a rain storm was destroyed during the fire that devastated the area between Julian and Warner Springs.

The County provided 10,000 sandbags to area residents free of charge.

"We are looking for ways to protect several properties from potential flooding," Isbell said. "We are also planning to use our Rainfall Alert System to provide early warning to residents of potential flooding conditions."



***DPW team evaluates
Pines Fire burn area.***

Land Development

TSA Takes Over At Palomar



***TSA security director
Michael J. Aguilar speaks to
crowd at Palomar Airport.***

Federal agents took over passenger security screening at McClellan-Palomar Airport last month. Officers from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) assumed responsibility at the County's only commercial airport November 5.

"TSA is committed to working with the airport and the community at large to ensure the security of the flying public," said Michael J. Aguilar, federal security director for Palomar. "Our new federal screeners are highly trained and highly motivated to provide the world-class customer service and world-class security the American people deserve."

Sky West Airlines, United Express's operator at Palomar, provided passenger screening until TSA took over.